

## Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 COLOMB 04083 120330Z  
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 MCT-02 SY-05 CAB-02  
CIAE-00 COME-00 DOTE-00 EB-08 INR-10 NSAE-00  
FAA-00 L-03 ACDA-12 PM-05 H-01 NSC-05 PA-01  
SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 HA-05 /123 W  
-----083800 121333Z /47

R 111130Z SEP 78  
FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1304  
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI  
AMCONSUL MADRAS  
USUN NEW YORK 865  
DIA WASHDC

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE COLOMBO 4083

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS:PINS, CE  
SUBJECT: INVESTIGATION OF EXPLOSION ABOARD AIR CEYLON AIRCRAFT

REF: COLOMBO 4057

1. A POLICE SPECIAL EXPLOSIVES TEAM AND ARMED SERVICES  
TECHNICAL PERSONNEL ARE INVESTIGATING AIR CEYLON AVRO 748  
WRECKAGE.THEY REPORTEDLY FOUND PIECES OF WHAT MIGHT HAVE  
BEEN A TIME BOMB. POLICE CLAIM TIME BOMBS NEVER USED BEFORE  
IN COUNTRY, THAT ITS MECHANISM IS TOO INTRICATE TO HAVE BEEN  
PRODUCED LOCALLY, AND SPECULATE IT MAY HAVE BEEN OF FOREIGN  
ORGIN.

2. POLICE HAVE DESCRIPTIONS OF TWO YOUTHS WHO ALLEGEDLY  
REMAINED ON ARICRAFT SEVERAL MINUTES AFTER AIRCRAFT LANDED  
FROM JAFFNA AND AFTER FLIGHT ATTENDANTS AND OTHER PASSENGERS HAD  
DEBARKED. THEY WERE REPORTEDLY SITTING IN AREA WHERE BOMB LATER  
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EXPLODED. A TAXI DRIVER REPORTED HAVING BEEN HIRED  
BY A THIRD YOUTH TO GO TO RATMALANA WHERE HE PICK  
UP TWO MORE YOUTHS AND DROPPED THEM IN BUSY AREA ON  
OUTSKIRTS OF COLOMBO. APPARENTLY TAXI DRIVER'S DESCRIPTION  
OF YOUTHS TALLIES WITH THAT OF OTHER PASSENGERS ABOARD  
PLANE.

3. PILOT OF AIRCRAFT REPORTEDLY TRIED TO USE PLANE'S FIRE EXTINGUISHER ON INITIALLY SMALL FIRE (ALTHOUGH PRESS REPORTS SAY PLANE WAS RIPPED IN TWO BY EXPLOSION) BUT EXTINGUISHER WAS INOPERABLE. THE PILOT BELIEVES HE COULD HAVE DOUSED FIRE HAD EXTINGUISHER WORKED.

4. PLANE WAS SCHEDULED TO SHUTTLE TO KATANAYAKE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT TO PICK UP PASSENGERS FOR MALDIVES. PILOT OF AIRCRAFT TOLD EMBASSY SECRETARY THAT HE BELIEVES BOMB WAS MEANT TO DETONATE WHILE PLANE WAS OVER COLOMBO BUT WENT OFF PREMATURELY BECAUSE IT WAS POORLY MADE.

5. COMMENT: LIBERATION TIGERS WHO CLAIM RESPONSIBILITY FOR EXPLOSION MAY HAVE BEEN TRYING FOR A SPECTACULAR DEMONSTRATION OF THEIR OPPOSITION TO NEW CONSTITUTION ON DAY IT WAS BEING PROMULGATED. HOWEVER, THERE IS ALSO SPECULATION THAT EXTREMIST SINHALESE MAY HAVE PLANTED BOMB AND ARE ENDEAVORING TO IMPLICATE TAMILS TO INCITE PERSECUTION BY GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES. FROM EXTREMISTS' STANDPOINT THIS WOULD BE FAVORABLE DEVELOPMENT AS IT COULD MOVE TAMIL EXTREMISTS TO MAKE COMMON CAUSE WITH SINHALESE RADICALS. NO EVIDENCE AVAILABLE TO SUBSTANTIATE ANY OF THESE SPECULATIONS. END COMMENT.  
WRIGGINS

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NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** AIRCRAFT, EXPLOSIVES, INVESTIGATIONS, AIRCRAFT ACCIDENTS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 11 sep 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1978COLOMB04083  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
**Film Number:** D780370-0550  
**Format:** TEL  
**From:** COLOMBO  
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**Legacy Key:** link1978/newtext/t19780983/aaaacqmf.tel  
**Line Count:** 85  
**Litigation Code IDs:**  
**Litigation Codes:**  
**Litigation History:**  
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**Message ID:** d2697053-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Office:** ACTION NEA  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 2  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 78 COLOMBO 4057  
**Retention:** 0  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 06 may 2005  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**SAS ID:** 1489261  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** INVESTIGATION OF EXPLOSION ABOARD AIR CEYLON AIRCRAFT  
**TAGS:** PINS, CE  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**vdkgvwkey:** odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS\_Docs/d2697053-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014